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ABSTRACT

In response to high demand for English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instruction among the community's Chinese-speaking population, the Quincy School Community Council (Massachusetts) developed the Take And Give (TAG) program, in which graduates of the highest-level ESL classes were trained as peer tutors for students at the lowest instructional level. The program's goal is to help students at the introductory level, at which there is greatest demand for instruction, bypass level 1 classes and proceed to level 2 classes. TAG students study at home using a videotape series and meet with tutors bi-weekly to review, supplement, and practice what they have learned. The first 8-week tutor training cycle and student recruitment began in January 1992. The report details the evaluation of both the tutor training program and the student instructional program, and includes a program participant profile. Evaluation of student ESL learning focuses on student background, motivation, learning strategies, and classroom performance. Further development of an ongoing program evaluation system is also discussed. Appended materials include data on TAG participants and comparison groups, classroom observation data, and TAG program participant retention data. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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EVALUATION OF THE QUINCY SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL'S TAKE AND GIVE PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

September, 1993

by

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and

Maryana H. Huston

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Executive Summary

TAG Background

By the summer of 1990, the Quincy School Community Council's Adult English as a Second Language program was facing waiting lists of over 1000 new immigrants (mostly Chinese) for its English classes. In response, they created the Take and Give (TAG) Program, in which peer tutors, graduates of the top level English classes, were trained to work with learners on the waiting lists. The TAG learner participants study in their own homes a videotape series called "Practical English," developed specifically for Chinese learners of English. The tutors meet with pairs of TAG learners every two weeks to review, supplement, and practice English lessons associated with the tapes. The goal is to prepare participants for entry into a Level 2 English class within six months to a year, thus bypassing the Level 1 classes where the greatest logjam exists. The TAG Program received its first funding and began operation in late 1991 with planning and, in January 1992, the first 8-week training cycle for tutors and recruitment of TAG learners.

The Evaluation

By the summer of 1992, initial indicators were that the program was successful, and that it should continue, develop, perhaps be replicated by others, and that a formal evaluation should be conducted to support those processes. As a result, funding was obtained by a grant from the U.S. National Institute for Literacy to continue support and development of the program as well as to conduct an evaluation, for which Development Assistance Corporation of Dover NH was selected as the subcontractor.

The evaluation design was intended to be useful as an ongoing program analysis and feedback system to QSCC's staff as well as a conventional external evaluation. Two features resulted from this intention: one, DAC involved TAG staff in instrument development and trained them to conduct data collection activities throughout the project to build QSCC's capacity in evaluation; and two, DAC and TAG staff jointly worked through an adaptation and application of the Discrepancy Evaluation Model for TAG, yielding a framework for an integrated system of evaluation and program analysis and development.

Out of this DEM framework, we focused the evaluation on both processes and outcomes of the tutor training component and the tutoring components. To do so, we conducted the following data collection activities:

- interviews with 17 of the 37 tutors, after they had tutored for at least two months
- native language interviews with 36 of the 109 TAG participants, after they had been tutored for at least two months

- *interviews with the three teachers of AESL Level 2 classes into which TAG "graduates" entered*
- *administration of the BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST) to TAG and nonTAG students in Level 2 classes, pre and post*
- *observations of the tutor training program, two different cycles*
- *observations of the AESL Level 2 classes into which TAG "graduates" entered*
- *collection and analysis of record/file data on participant characteristics and program retention*

Participant Profile

The general trend among TAG participants, compared to AESL Level 1 and 2 waiting list members, and Level 2 enrollees, is that they are slightly older, less educated, and more often married and with children than their counterparts in the other groups. These are the people who might find it more difficult to schedule a formal class than their younger, more educated, single or fewer children fellows would. Thus, TAG affords an important opportunity for them to begin English learning in a manner more suited to their life circumstances. TAG is not used just by the immigrants with the characterization above, however, for the entire spectrum of demographic characteristics are represented by the participants.

Evaluation of the Tutor Training Process and Outcomes

In the tutors' views, the tutor training program was effective in making them feel prepared to tutor. They highlighted the achievement of the two main program objectives: better English pronunciation and teaching skills. While the best features of the training program were seen as learning good teaching skills, having a good model in their trainer, ways of motivating students, and speaking with more experienced tutors, they also suggested that improvements might be made in having more time to learn, building more confidence, learning more American usages of words, doing more reading, and learning techniques particularly useful for adult students. There was also a repeated theme of desiring that more tutoring practice be part of the training program. The materials used in the tutor training were unanimously seen as very helpful, although a few found the reporting materials too hard to use.

The tutees generally rate their tutors very well, with only a few commenting that they don't understand all they would like to from the sessions. After some experience tutoring, some tutors indicated the need for help in making more and better practice sheets for their students. Some tutors apparently do this to a great degree and others do not, a feature mentioned by both tutors and tutees. It was also suggested that periodic -- say, bimonthly -- sessions be held for the tutors to come together to discuss their ongoing experiences tutoring.

The tutees almost unanimously rated the videotapes and supportive materials as "just right" in level of difficulty for the TAG participants to learn English, with a few indicating they were either "too easy" or "too hard." The tutors, however, were almost equally split as to whether the tapes were "too easy," "just right," or "too hard." Some areas for improvement noted included having longer dialogues and lessons, more subtitles for the teachers' speech on the tapes, books to accompany the tapes, more conversations about daily life, slower speed, and updating the skits.

Evaluation of Participants' English Learning

The immigrants enrolled in the TAG Program generally had some minimal training in English before their U.S. arrival, and a few months of English study in the U.S. before participating in the TAG Program. They report being able to use very little English upon arrival, and they made little progress in English usage before TAG. After two or more months of TAG tutoring, however, they report a substantial increase in their English vocabulary, speaking with more detailed phrases, and using longer and more complete sentences. In addition, their confidence in using English is reportedly increased substantially by this point, even after little increase in earlier learning stages.

The main motivations for learning English are economic -- to get an initial or better job and to conduct their shopping. Other uses of English are present but secondary. Moreover, the TAG students in AESL classes are reported by their teachers to work somewhat harder than other students, possibly indicating higher levels of motivation.

The majority of TAG participants found that the English levels used in the main tutoring tool, the videotapes and supporting materials, were "just right" to help them learn well, with a few finding them either "too difficult" or "too easy." In addition to these formal course materials, however, other television programs and movies were widely reported to be of additional assistance in learning English, along with talking to their children who were learning English in school, features which the TAG Program might attempt to capitalize on in future developments.

Once the TAG students enter AESL Level 2 classrooms, they appear able to perform well. Interviews with the teachers indicated that, while their other students generally respond in class at a mid-level of confidence and ability, the TAG students varied widely, from speaking without hesitation at any opportunity to almost never attempting to speak. After a few months in the classes, however, the TAG students appear to "catch up" in response level to the norm.

As judged by standardized English test scores, the TAG students gained about as much in English literacy as the other students. The non-TAG students, however, showed gains in oral English skills at about twice the level of the TAG students. This latter result

would worth examining further. Using the outside observers' ratings of English performance in the classrooms as the criterion, however, the TAG students performed only very slightly lower in English level than the non-TAG students, and both groups gained at about the same rates.

Conclusions

A. The TAG Program is clearly an efficient opportunity for immigrants to start formally studying English sooner than available classroom opportunities allow. This is especially true for those who fit into demographic groups with the greatest scheduling and other logistical barriers.

B. The tutor training appears to be successful in developing English and tutoring skills to at least an adequate level for effective tutoring.

C. The videotapes and supportive written materials appear to be at the appropriate level of challenge for most of the tutees, and the tutors appear to use them well in teaching English.

D. TAG appears to have provided a substantial boost to the participants' English learning and confidence in English usage.

E. TAG participants who enter AESL Level 2 classes progress as well as their non-TAG classmates in English literacy skills, but not nearly as well in oral language skills.

F. The tutor competency, monitoring, and ongoing improvement component of the program could be better formalized.

G. TAG staff evaluation capability has been developed, but its more complete establishment appears blocked by time availability or commitment to evaluation activities.

For an amplified discussion of each conclusion above, see Section VII of the full report. Overviews of the program components outlined in the DEM framework and of the findings for each are presented in Figures 2 and 3 of the full report.

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DJC

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I. INTRODUCTION: Background of the TAG Program

In the summer of 1990, the Adult English as a Second Language (AESL) program staff of Quincy School Community Council, Inc. (QSCC) began creating their answer to the long waiting lists of new Asian (mostly Chinese) immigrants in need of English instruction. In addition to the 500 adult students studying English as a Second Language (ESL) in regular classrooms at QSCC, over 1000 were on waiting lists to enter classes.[1] By the spring of 1991, an innovative design, called the TAKE AND GIVE (TAG) Program, was ready and funding sought. Initial funding of $220,000 for three years was provided by two private foundations: The Harcourt General Charitable Foundation/The Neiman Marcus Group and The Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust.

Ongoing 8-week training cycles of about six AESL program graduates per cycle began in January 1992. When trained, these peer tutors work with newcomers using a videotaped series of ESL lessons called "Practical English." Since the greatest logjam of waiting list students was for Level 1 (basic survival English), the TAG Program had a goal to get learners into Level 2 and, therefore, off the logjam part of the waiting lists by eliminating their need for Level 1 classes.

The tutors, typically graduates of QSCC's Level 6 (the top level) classes, through the training sessions, continue to learn English as well as tutoring methods. At the completion of

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[1]These facts, as well as other background information on TAG's evolution, are presented in "Breaking the Waiting List Logjam: Training Peer Tutors for ESL," by Roger Hooper, in *All Write News* of the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, Boston, MA, Volume VIII, No. 6, May/June 1992.

training, the tutors are matched by TAG staff with two or more students to meet twice a month to review the video lessons and supplementary worksheets, and work on other activities. The TAG students work at their own pace on the video lessons and worksheets between tutoring sessions, depending on their schedules and abilities. Having tutors with similar backgrounds to their own and success at English learning is considered beneficial to students, and peer tutors can continue learning and find gratification from helping others.

By the summer of 1992, it appeared that the TAG Program was initially successful and could continue, develop, and perhaps be replicated by other ESL providers. A search of the U.S. Department of Education's ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) system at this time indicated no other similar programs. The TAG Program indeed appeared to be a ground-breaking effort. Further funding was then sought to continue implementation of the TAG Program and to conduct a comprehensive evaluation in order to improve it, to report on its successes, and to disseminate it as a model. Having gained funding from the National Institute for Literacy, as well as continued support from the private foundations, QSCC was ready to subcontract an evaluator. Development Assistance Corporation (DAC) was chosen to evaluate the program and began working directly with TAG staff that fall.

This report presents the original evaluation purposes and planned activities, how the evaluation was designed, what actual activities took place, what the findings and conclusions are, and what the next steps might be.

II. EVALUATION DESIGN AND ACTIVITIES

Purposes and Overview

After considering possible evaluation models with TAG staff, DAC and TAG agreed to use an adaptation of the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) as a particularly beneficial framework for this type of program, as well as its "user-friendliness" to TAG staff in integrating the evaluation with the program development process. This framework and associated implementation processes were particularly important because of its requirement that the TAG staff be integrally involved in articulating the framework. In this case, a considerable amount of data collection had to be conducted by the bilingual TAG staff. Thus, their involvement in the developmental aspects of the evaluation helped their understanding of the data collection, analysis, and evaluation use aspects.

The DEM as applied to the TAG Program essentially consists of four steps, summarized as:

1. articulate the TAG Program's goals and objectives; then outline the resources, implementation processes, and outcomes for each objective;

2. document each element of the resources and implementation activities, and measure and analyze the outcomes (which may include context and baseline information such as pretest status), for each objective;

3. analyze the discrepancies or the congruencies along the "track" from objectives, through resources, implementation, and outcomes, to identify those program elements that are working well or are not; and

4. present the resulting evaluation to the program staff so that they can take steps to develop improvement plans for the weak areas and reinforce or expand the strong areas.

The DEM was built around the actual goals and objectives of the TAG Program, and several drafts were analyzed by DAC and TAG staff until a satisfactory model was completed (detailed in the next section). Three main goals emerged from this analysis which will be examined closely in this report:

GOAL #1: TUTOR TRAINING -- TRAIN AESL PROGRAM GRADUATES AS ENGLISH TUTORS TO SUCCESSFULLY MATCH WITH APPROPRIATE LEARNERS FROM THE WAITING LIST

GOAL #2: ENGLISH LEARNING -- TEACH ENGLISH TO CHINESE-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS ON AESL WAITING LIST THROUGH THE TAG TUTORING PROGRAM TO FACILITATE THEIR ENTRY INTO THE AESL CLASSES

GOAL #3: EVALUATE AND IMPROVE TAG

We planned to collect and analyze data on the first two goals which would then be incorporated into the third goal. As part of this third goal, DAC would design an evaluation system in consultation with the TAG staff and conduct its activities for the first year, presenting a report with program analysis, conclusions, and recommendations at the end. Through this "conventional" evaluation, the TAG staff could consider those results for possible program development and improvement as part of their ongoing operation. Additionally, DAC would train TAG staff to carry out those methods of the evaluation which worked well and which fit appropriately into their program operation roles, so that a useful and reasonable adaptation of the evaluation could be continued internally after this formal contract ended.

Evaluation Design

Following several planning sessions, attended by TAG and DAC staff members, and the choice and adaptation of the DEM, specific

activities were selected and outlined to measure the outcomes and implementation processes of the two TAG Program goals. The processes include the interactive aspects of 1) the program elements, 2) the peer tutors, and 3) the students. The outcomes consist of a) individual outcomes such as the improvement of a student's English skills, and b) the general program outcomes such as how well each goal or objective is attained (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Factors to Be Measured

PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS	
o goals/objectives o tutor-training o intake/assessment o curriculum materials o videotapes o tutor supervision o problem-solving o other resources	
PROGRAM OUTCOMES	
TAG STUDENTS	TUTORS
· English · attitudes · learning skills · satisfaction · ***individual outcomes***	· qualifications · certification · procedures · reporting · ***individual outcomes***

To ascertain whether the TAG goals and objectives are appropriate and have been achieved, we planned activities to measure characteristics of the program, tutors, and students, assess the students and tutor training, and examine other indicators of the program such as materials, videotapes, and other resources. Besides the BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS TEST (BEST), developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics, the instruments we chose

were developed by us specifically for use in the TAG Program, piloted at the Quincy School, and revised with TAG staff to best measure outcomes and processes. Six methods emerged as most feasible, taking into account the evaluation needs and resources:

- TAG Tutor Interviews
- TAG Participant Interviews
- AESL Level 2 Teacher Interviews
- BEST Test Administration
- TAG Tutor Training Observations
- AESL Classroom Observations
- extraction of student data from records/files.

These activities, conducted by both DAC and TAG staff, are described in more detail in the next section. Results and analysis of the outcomes can be found in sections IV and V. The copies of instruments themselves are included another volume, the Training Manual.

Evaluation Activities

One of the major project activities, the backbone of the evaluation, involved *developing the evaluation system*. The intention is that this system will be transferred to the TAG operations as part of its normal functioning. The set of activities for developing the evaluation system included: a) development of the initial evaluation framework through applying the DEM to the TAG; b) developing a set of preliminary instruments and a data collection plan; c) pilot-testing and revising the

instruments; d) training bilingual TAG staff in the data collection instruments and methods; and e) collecting data and analyzing it.

To develop the initial evaluation framework using the DEM, we first drafted an analytical description of the TAG Program based on our outsiders' knowledge of the program from written materials provided by the TAG staff, reviews of curriculum materials and sample videotapes, and from conversations with the staff. This analytical description outlined the key activities we saw occurring (or planned) within each program goal, and then the resources necessary to conduct each activity successfully and the expected outcomes for each activity. The draft was presented to the TAG staff for comment, then again revised by DAC. After two such internal staff critiques and external evaluator revisions, the final working version of the DEM was developed (see Figure 2).

DAC staff then reviewed the outcomes of the working DEM to assign potential types of measurement for each outcome, selecting from among: a) interviews with TAG participants, tutors, and AESL teachers; b) observations of the intake process, tutor training sessions, and AESL classes; c) English learning assessments; and d) records' retrieval. Proposed instruments with the outcomes to be measured by each were presented to and discussed with TAG staff before finalization. Refinements from these discussions included the addition of information available in participants' records, clarifications that certain types of information might not be accessible through participant interviews, and translation of the participant interview form into Chinese by TAG staff, since it was

determined that this instrument would have to be administered in Chinese because of the low English levels of participants. In the cases of observation instruments, DAC was allowed to conduct exploratory observations of tutor training sessions and AESL classes in order to become acquainted in detail with those settings and operations. For the English assessment, we were assisted by a consultant with extensive experience in English testing for LEP populations, who reviewed several available tests and discussed them with the TAG staff. The consensus was to use the BEST.

Pilot testing and revision of instruments were conducted by DAC staff. TAG staff were then trained by DAC in the administration of the BEST, the participant interview protocol, and AESL class observation.

The following data collection activities were conducted:

- TAG Tutor Interviews -- conducted 17 interviews in English with tutors (of the 37 trained); these included 6 of 24 from Cycles 1-4, 5 of 6 from Cycle 5, and 6 of 7 from Cycle 6.

- TAG Participant Interviews -- conducted 36 interviews in Chinese with a sample of the 109 participants in Cycles 1 - 6.

- AESL Level 2 Teacher Interviews -- conducted interviews with the three teachers who had TAG students in their classes.

- BEST Administration -- administered pretest in January and June to 39 students in two Level 2 classes, 16 TAG participants, 23 not TAG participants; administered pretest in August to 29 students in the two classes, 17 TAG participants, 12 not TAG participants.

- TAG Tutor Training Observations -- conducted pilot tests of observation forms during the Cycle 6 training; conducted pre- and post-observations during the Cycle 7 training.

• AESL Level 2 Classroom Observations -- conducted pilot tests of the observation forms during Fall 1992; pre-, mid-, and post-observations during the January-June 1993 term; and pre-observations during the July-December 1993 term.

• Record/file Data Extraction -- pulled demographic characteristics from student database, crosstabulated; examined files on each tutee for retention information.

GOAL #3: TUTOR TRAINING — TRAIN AESL PROGRAM PERSONNEL TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE AND SUCCESSFULLY MATCH WITH APPROPRIATE LEARNERS FROM THE [illegible]

Objectives:
A. 85% of recruits will successfully complete the training.
B. All tutors will make a one-year commitment to TAC.

Resources	Implementation Activities	Outcomes
- TAC staff time - AESL graduates' database - funds for copying, postage	A. [illegible]	[illegible]
- TAC staff time - TAC staff resource and expert consultants on planning, implementation, and evaluation of training - other programs' experiences and information - funds to purchase videotapes, books, copyright, etc. - consultants — TA Services (ALRI, SDE) - AESL/staff time	B. [illegible]	[illegible]
- TAC staff time - TAC staff trained and experienced to conduct training - sufficient number of recruit players - adequate classroom space - instructionally appropriate materials	C. Conduct training	[illegible]

[illegible]

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GOAL #2: ENGLISH LEARNING -- TEACH ENGLISH TO CHINESE-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS ON AESL WAITING LIST THROUGH THE TAG TUTORING PROGRAM TO FACILITATE THEIR ENTRY INTO THE AESL CLASSES

Objectives:

A. To retain 85% of the TAG learners in the TAG Program for at least six weeks

B. 50% of the TAG learners retained in TAG program to reach level 2 AESL entry level within one year.

Resources	Implementation Activities	Outcomes
- TAG staff time - TAG staff trained and experienced to develop curriculum - other programs' curriculum and instructional materials - funds to purchase videotapes, books, copying, etc. - consultants -- TA services (ALRI, SDE) - AESL staff time	A. Develop Curriculum and Materials - includes: objectives, instructional activities, materials, schedule, assessment procedures - staff coordination - revise/change - other AESL staff revisions	sufficient number of videotapes and print materials curriculum and materials instructionally appropriate for TAG learners sound curriculum plan ongoing revision of TAG materials
- TAG staff time - selection criteria - waiting list database - AESL staff time	B. Select TAG Learners - explanation of program requirements and benefits - notification process - intake assessment	- 24 TAG learners enrolled per cycle
- TAG staff time - matching criteria - TAG tutor and learner information	C. Match TAG tutors and TAG learners	- TAG learners per TAG tutor
- sufficient number of videotapes - videotapes - TAG tutors' time commitments	D. Conduct TAG tutor/learner sessions - orientation - instruction - progress assessment	- 4 meetings per month for 6 months by each team - 50% learners progress 1 level/year rate in English proficiency - 85% retention rate over one year - TAG learners' enhanced learning skills and increased confidence
- TAG staff time - TAG staff skill in supervision - monitoring system established	E. Monitor TAG tutors - tutor supervision - tutor feedback	- maintained or improved TAG tutor quality maintained or improved TAG tutoring process
- TAG staff time - TAG learners' availability - AESL classroom space	F. Place TAG Learners into AESL Classes	- TAG learners enrolled in AESL classes at appropriate level

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GOAL #3: EVALUATE AND IMPROVE TAG

Objectives:
A. To develop a system for TAG's ongoing evaluation
B. To develop TAG's stable capability to use [illegible] evaluation system
C. To prepare a (U.S. Department of Education) Program Effectiveness Panel submission

Resources	Implementation Activities	Outcomes
- DAC staff time - TAG staff time - meeting time - travel resources	A. Develop System for Program Evaluation, Analysis, and Feedback: - TAG [illegible] - [illegible]	Program component analyses [illegible] by TAC about [illegible] [illegible]
- DAC staff time - TAG staff time - [illegible] - schedule - cooperation of [illegible] - ABSI [illegible]	B. [illegible] [illegible]	[illegible]
- TAC staff time - DAC staff time - evaluation findings	C. [illegible] [illegible] DAC [illegible] DAC/TAC [illegible] TAC [illegible] information to modify program for 1992-93 TAC report to [illegible] [illegible]	[illegible] of TAC TAC [illegible] [illegible]

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III. TAG PARTICIPANT PROFILE

One of the important considerations in evaluating the effect of a program is what the participants are like. Additionally, when the participants' results are compared to those of non-participants, we also want to know how the characteristics of the two groups compare to each other. In the case of TAG, we can then try to determine if any differences in such results as English achievement between TAG participants and other AESL class students might be attributable to basic student differences and not necessarily the effect of the TAG tutoring.

To examine these issues, information on a number of demographic characteristics was retrieved from QSCC's data files on four groups of people as of March 1993: TAG participants, AESL Level 1 waiting list members, Level 2 waiting list members, and Level 2 enrollees. The data gathered included: years on the waiting list, gender, age, marital status, number of children, years of formal education, months of previous English study, time in the U.S., and income. All information of a changing nature (e.g., time in the U.S.) was specific to the time of registration with QSCC. Detailed information on each characteristic for the TAG enrollees and three comparison groups is presented in Appendix A.

The TAG participants are generally characterized as follows. More than half (57 percent) have been on the AESL waiting list for less than one year before getting into TAG, although a third were on for almost three years (which is probably a one-time occurrence, since TAG only began within the past year, and there was a backlog of long-time waiting list members). By contrast, half or more of

the Levels 1 and 2 waiting list members and the Level 2 enrollees were on waiting lists for almost three years. Thus, TAG is clearly an opportunity to begin formal English study sooner than by waiting for an AESL class.

While a slight majority (54 percent) of the TAG participants are in the 25-44 age category, this is substantially lower than the great majority (68 to 80 percent) of this age group in the other three comparison groups. The difference is made up for by the 35 percent of TAG participants in the 45-59 age group, compared to lower numbers in the comparison groups (10, 16, and 22 percent). That is, TAG participants tend to be somewhat older than those who remain on class waiting lists or enroll in Level 2 classes.

Perhaps consistent with the age differences, the formal education levels completed by TAG participants is slightly lower than those waiting for classes or enrolled in Level 2. Over two-thirds of TAG participants reported formal education of 4-6 years or 7-9 years. The Level 1 waiting list members have slightly more in the 7-9 years and 10 plus years categories, and the Level 2 waiting list members and class enrollees have 80 and 58 percent respectively in those two categories.

Since their time on the waiting list was comparatively short, the TAG students' time in the U.S. was also less than that of the other groups' members -- 77 percent of the TAG participants were in the U.S. for less than three years, compared to 40, 50, and 58 percent for the other groups.

Again consistent with the fact that the TAG students are somewhat older than the members of the other groups, a greater percentage of them are married compared to the other groups (85

percent, compared to 73 to 77 percent). They also generally have more children.

Finally, 71 percent of the TAG participants are female and 29 percent male. The relative percentages of females and males are similar for each of the comparison groups.

In practice, therefore, the general trend is that TAG seems most suited for immigrants who have come to the U.S. quite recently and wish to get started formally learning English sooner than classroom opportunities allow. They are also slightly older, less educated, and more often married and have children than other immigrants. This group may find it easier to begin their study of English in a less formal way than a traditional class and may also find the scheduling easier than the four days (or nights) a week for six months that the classes at QSCC meet. Thus, TAG appears to provide an opportunity to overcome logistical scheduling barriers as well as those of possible intimidation by formal classes for less-educated immigrants. While that characterization exists, it is not universal, however, and clearly others who are younger, more educated, have been in the U.S. and on waiting lists longer have also taken advantage of TAG's opportunity.

IV. EVALUATION OF THE TUTOR TRAINING PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

The first goal of the TAG Program was to train AESL program graduates as English tutors, who could then conduct tutoring with Chinese immigrants on the class waiting list. To evaluate the extent to which that goal has been attained we interviewed[2] a sample of 36 participants selected from those 109 tutored in cycles 1 through 6, and 17 of the 37 tutors trained in cycles 1 through 6.[3] Interviews with three AESL teachers, whose then-current Level 2 classes included some students who had completed the TAG Program, also provided some comments on the overall tutoring program. Additionally, we observed the 6th cycle tutor training session about midway through its two-month term and the 7th cycle training program near its beginning and its end, and examined materials and curriculum time usage for the tutor training program.

Observations of the Tutor Training Program

The tutor training curriculum has three main objectives: learning in English skills, tutoring/teaching skills, and using the TAG reporting system. A time analysis of the scheduled activities classified into those categories indicated that approximately 48% of time is spent on the tutoring/teaching skills, 44% on English learning, 2% on reporting, and 7% on other activities. These other activities include, for example, introductions among the group

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[2] The interview questions were developed by DAC, refined with the assistance of the TAG staff, field-tested and finalized by DAC, and translated into Chinese and administered by TAG staff. The responses were then translated into English by TAG staff and presented to DAC for analysis.

[3] These 17 included a volunteer sample of six of the 24 trained in cycles 1 through 4, which had been completed before we began the evaluation, and 11 of the 13 trained during the course of this evaluation.

However, the translating did not necessarily come from the teacher, but another trainee or after some discussion between several people and some dictionary use. The only apparent disadvantage to the high use of English was that those who are less comfortable speaking English to their Chinese peers participated less in the verbal activities.

Materials. The blackboard was rarely used as much of the work was done either verbally or on newsprint posted around the room. In addition to the agenda, many handouts with stories, phonetics, case studies, questions, pictures, etc. were used. The trainees accumulated these to use in their own teaching later when they would have students. Actual record-keeping sheets were used for practice and to talk about the goals of tutoring. Sometimes the TV and VCR and videocassettes were used to view a lesson. Although not required by the teacher, several of the trainees would bring Chinese/English hand-held computer dictionaries for translating.

Impressions. Although participation varied depending on topic and trainee comfort in speaking up, the tutor training sessions were lively and much material was covered. It was apparent that the trainers were establishing a trusting relationship with the potential tutors which they hoped would facilitate the process later if any problems came up. The case studies were based on real situations which the tutors might come across, and, as a result of the rapport with the trainer and practice in dealing with them, would know how to handle or who to turn to if stumped. Many of the trainees entered with a mixed feeling of excitement and fear that they had the opportunity to teach -- something most of them had never done, and none had done in English. The attitude of the

teacher and all the experience of working one-on-one with their peers would seem to be positive for the tutors' emulation. For example, the teacher never replied, "No, that's wrong," but instead made a suggestion or elicited better ideas for the subject at hand.

Tutor Training and Skills: Tutor and Participant Perspectives

The trainees' backgrounds in English, the foundation on which the TAG tutor training program builds, includes having initially learned English to a considerable degree in China or Hong Kong (or, in rare cases, another native country). For about a third of the tutors it was only in primary school, but for the other two-thirds it was in high school or college. Most tutor trainees also studied English at other community-based organization programs in the Boston area or at a local community college, in addition to having studied in, and graduating from the highest level of QSCC's AESL program.

These trainees indicate having moderate strengths in English writing, reading, speaking, listening, and grammar, all areas about equally balanced. Of all the types of English usage, almost all indicate a desire to increase their speaking ability, although about a third were also interested in improving their listening skills. In addition, most indicated a desire to continue their own schooling in the future, primarily to learn more English, although in about half wanted to study accounting, clerical and secretarial skills, and computer programming. Four individuals each wanted to study more specialized areas: teaching methods, nursing, medicine, and metal coating (an already practicing chemical engineer).

When asked if they were ready to tutor after the training, all respondents indicated that they were. Eleven of the 17 indicated no prior experience tutoring or teaching English. Of the six who had prior experience, this included teaching nursing, experience as a translator for Chinese-speaking clients in banks and hospitals, teaching assistant in a refugee camp, and teaching Chinese to high school students.

The features these tutors felt were most salient about their preparation in the tutor training program included teaching skills and better English pronunciation, grammar, and writing, following the two main program objectives. Other less salient features mentioned were confidence and patience to help students through learning difficulties.

One of the AESL teachers of TAG "graduates" suggested that an area for improvement would be to have the tutors go through a more intensive English learning and teaching methodology training, that these were needed to develop their confidence more and to gain more respect from the TAG students. This suggestion was made in the context of recognizing that the tutors do a "very good job" with the training and backgrounds they do have, but that this improvement would help the English learning of the TAG participants even more. The comment was also made in recognition of additional funding needed to provide that more intensive training, as the currently limited funds are being utilized to their fullest extent possible.

The "best" parts of the training program mentioned by tutors were the teaching skills learned, having a trainer who modeled good teaching, ways to get in touch with students, the grammar, writing

and pronunciation improvement gained, the good organization of the sessions, and the session(s) in which experienced tutors came in to talk with the trainees about tutoring. Items mentioned that might have been better about the training included (followed by the frequency they were mentioned):

- more time to learn, training cycle too short (4)
- more English speaking practice (and less Chinese) (4)
- more reading, writing and grammar (3)
- building more confidence in tutoring and English usage (1)
- more American usage, other meanings of words (2)
- how to teach adults in particular (1)
- understanding body language (1)
- learning from experienced teachers about how they teach (1).

The learning materials such as worksheets, handouts, and the "survival kit" in the training program were almost unanimously rated as helping the tutors "very much," with only two tutors rating them as "somewhat" helpful. Reasons given for the helpfulness of these materials highlighted the facts that they could review lessons at home, they could use them with their tutees, they were particularly good for new vocabulary and speaking and listening, they were good for adults, and they received quick feedback from the teacher. When asked what about the learning materials could have made them more useful, about half of the respondents indicated that they couldn't think of anything. Others (one person each) found that when using them with their TAG tutees, some found them too difficult, and that they wanted materials with more homework assignments, pronunciation practice, short stories with vocabulary exercises, and more writing practice.

The Tutoring Process and Materials

We asked the tutors a number of questions about their TAG students' work in the tutoring process. All but two agreed that their students come to sessions every time and do their homework. A slight majority rated their students as working "somewhat" hard to learn English, although most of the rest indicated their students worked "very hard," and only one indicated the students worked "a little." Thus, in general, the tutors perceive the TAG students as fairly well-motivated. A few tutors mentioned, however, that the main reasons some students work less than "very hard" at their English lessons is because they are extremely busy with their outside jobs, taking care of their children, or both, squeezing in what they can of tutoring sessions and related practice.

Particular features which the tutors think contribute most to their successes in teaching their students English included making special materials needed, the practice speaking in English, providing writing practice, asking the students what they want to learn and trying to provide that, requiring or encouraging the tutees to ask questions in English, and emphasizing grammar, vocabulary development, and, in one case, using maps to teach English.

The tutors' opinions about how difficult the students found the videotapes, the core of the learning tools, were almost evenly balanced among the tapes being "too easy" (for 8 students), "just

right" (7), and "too hard" (5).[4] Also, while five tutors thought the students found the tapes helpful for their students to learn English "a lot," the majority (10) thought the tapes helped students' English learning only "a little." These are by and large the ones who rated the tapes as too easy or too hard above. The tapes were, however, more often than not perceived as generally "interesting" rather than "too long," and were always available to students.

When asked what could be better about the tapes, some responded "nothing," but others indicated there was the need to watch the tapes multiple times to benefit from them[5], the need for a book to go with the tapes[6], and a need for more full sentences and longer sentences. Still others thought the tapes were too basic, needed more conversation, needed phonetics lessons, were old and needed to be updated, and two were at least mildly disconcerted by the tapes' California setting for Boston-based learners. Consistent with other information above, these responses seem to indicate that the tapes and other materials are generally targeted properly for the learning levels and needs of the TAG participants, but could be adjusted for some students at either end of the needs spectrum.

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[4] Since most tutors answered this question differentially for each of their students, the numbers shown add up to more than 17. The total is not much more because some tutors did not answer the question.

[5] Although this was mentioned by tutors as an area for improvement, the multiple viewing of tapes is actually a strength of the TAG design for the tapes' use, since learners can watch them as often as needed, at home, on their own schedules.

[6] There is actually a manual that accompanies the tapes, but the TAG staff deliberately decided at the outset against using it. It is considered quite sophisticated and complex, and the staff wanted to focus the activities of these tutors (most of whom were new to the teaching process) more precisely. As an alternative, TAG staff developed, and trained the tutors to use, the printed worksheets to accompany the tape lessons.

In contrast to the tapes themselves, the handouts that accompany the videotapes were perceived as "just right" by the strong majority (12 of 17) of tutors interviewed, but were also seen as "too hard" for a few, and "too easy" for one. They thought the handouts helped the students' English speaking "a little" about as often as "a lot." The length of the materials was viewed as "just right" or "too short," each about equally. The Chinese instructions on the handouts were reported to be read "easily" by students, indicating an appropriate level of native language support.

The tutors' explanations of their reasons for the ratings of some inadequacies here are instructive. Among the reasons they mention are: some students learn easily and go through two lessons per session; for those with higher English levels, it's not necessary to be so repetitive, it gets boring for the students; some students need mostly reading and writing practice, not so much oral language development; and some students are too busy to use the worksheets (which does not reflect negatively on the materials, but rather the ability of otherwise busy students to used them well).

The reporting materials used by the TAG tutors included: Evaluation of Learner's Basic Skills, Tutor Monthly Report, and the Tutor-Learner Study Plan. These were rated as useful by all but two tutors, and all but one found them easy to use. The two who did not find them useful included one who prefers to report orally and another who is too busy to do reporting and paperwork.

We discussed the tutors' assessments of themselves as tutors. Asked to provide highlights of what they did best in tutoring their

students, the tutors responded with such items as (roughly in order of frequency mentioned) applications to daily life, conversational practice with students, grammar and vocabulary, reassuring students, answering all the students' questions and finding out more information to give them if needed, improving their own English in the process, teaching writing and pronunciation, and remembering what was difficult for themselves in learning English and focusing on that with the students. What they would like to do better includes (each mentioned by only one or two tutors): making more and better practice sheets for students; generally gaining more experience tutoring and using English, both spoken and written; and teaching more writing, phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary.

Particularly difficult aspects of tutoring for this group involved (again, mentioned by only one or two each): being afraid, lacking confidence in the beginning, although this was apparently overcome with time; students who come late and make the tutor wait; students who don't do their homework; getting students to remember what they've learned; and keeping the same students from beginning to end. Two tutors indicated a problem with tutoring pairs of students who have very different English levels, that the slower one is often upset at not being able to keep up with the pace of the faster one and the faster one is bored.

As a final question in the interview, we asked the tutors, now that they've had the training session and at least two months' experience tutoring, for their general suggestions to help make the TAG Program better. The responses were widely varied, with the following suggestions made by number of tutors shown after each:

- getting together as a group every two months or so to talk about their experiences and learn from each other (4)
- more tutor training practice in conversation, to expand their vocabulary and speaking ability (3)
- tutor training longer than the current eight weeks (3)
- visit classes and talk to experienced teachers to get more teaching "tips" (2)
- more secure system for getting paid as planned (some students apparently want to pay less) (2)
- materials and techniques for teaching writing (2)
- more actual practice tutoring in the training sessions (1)
- teacher/student role playing during the training sessions (1)
- visiting classes to see how teachers teach (and thus learn some additional techniques that might be useful in tutoring) (1)
- make students come on time (1)
- English/Chinese dictionaries for students (1)
- meet with students more often than biweekly (1)
- materials and techniques for teaching grammar and phonetics (1)
- matching the same levels of students with each tutor (1).

Participants' Evaluation of the Tutoring Process and Materials

The TAG tutees generally rate their tutors very well. Over half the participants interviewed rated their tutors with the most positive descriptor we provided: *My tutor explains so that I understand all the English on the tapes and worksheets, and also answers my questions about other usage as well.* A third selected another positive descriptor for their tutors: *My tutor explains all the English on the tapes and worksheets so that I understand better and can use what I learn.* A small portion of the TAG participants, three of the 36, rated their tutors less positively with: *My tutor*

goes over the lessons on the tapes and worksheets, but I leave not understanding as much as I would like.

The items in Table IV-1 were drawn from items the tutors had indicated were the most important things they taught. The TAG tutees were asked in which ones their tutor was especially helpful. The frequency of responses is shown for each item. As the responses indicate, most of the items the tutors valued came through to the tutees. The one exception may be that of learning about living in the U.S., which was indicated as especially helpful by only 20, still over half, of the 36.

Table IV - 1

TUTORS ESPECIALLY HELPFUL IN:	NUMBER OF RESPONSES (out of 36)
Explaining English words or phrases	35
Talking over the skit on the tapes	32
Helping you with problems you have learning	32
Making you want to work harder at learning	30
Learning about living in the U.S.	20
Other: learning how to read, pronounce words lots of examples to explain a new word newspaper articles dictation of new words	1 1 1 1

The TAG tutees were also asked what activities they and the tutors could do in the sessions to help them learn English better. Curiously, some of the most frequent answers are very similar to those items rated as the most helpful things the tutors do. Nevertheless, the following items appeared.

Table IV - 2

ACTIVITIES TO HELP LEARN ENGLISH BETTER	NUMBER OF RESPONSES (out of 36)
Have more English conversation	23
Learn more what English words and phrases mean	20
Work on pronouncing English words and phrases more	19
Go over worksheets more	11
Other: - grammar and phonetics	4
- how to write in English	2
- teach citizenship materials	1
- more everyday usage	1
- more examples to explain words	1
- field trips to learn from "real life"	1
- materials beyond the video lessons	1
- have more frequent tutoring sessions	1
- nothing could be better or can't think of anything	3

The majority of the tutees rate the videotapes as "just right" (27 of the 36), although four found them "too hard" and four "too easy." The tapes also were viewed as helping them to speak English "a little" somewhat more than "a lot" (20 versus 13, respectively), although they were "interesting" rather than "too long" for 31 of the respondents. Less than half (40 percent), though still a substantial number, indicated that some things could be better about the tapes to help them learn English better. These included: phonetics, especially in the first few lessons (5 respondents), more conversations about daily life (3), longer lessons and dialogues (2), subtitles for everything the teacher says on the tapes (2), (1 each of the following) more examples to explain every word, a slower speed, update the skits, more exercises, teach citizenship, and English lessons on sewing (from a seamstress). Thus, in general, it appears that the TAG participants find the

videotapes adequate to help them learn English, with some fine-tuning suggested for improvements.

The TAG students' assessments of the worksheets that accompany the tapes almost perfectly paralleled their assessments of the tapes themselves, as described above. That is, they were generally "just right," with a few indicating they were "too easy" or "too hard"; they helped the participants learn English "a little" more than "a lot"; and they were "interesting" rather than "too repetitive." One exception was that 13 of the 36 thought there were "too few" worksheets. All reported being able to read the Chinese instructions on the sheets, and all but two people found them helpful (two who indicated they could do the lessons without the Chinese instructions).

It was noted above that some of the tutors like to make up their own extra worksheets and provide other supplementary materials and activities. This was verified by 15 of the 35 tutees' reports that their tutors do other learning activities beyond just the tapes and accompanying worksheets. They report being taken on field trips to learn how to shop and read prices (3 TAG students), extra phonetic exercises (2), practicing conversation on pictures the tutors bring (2), grammar exercises (2), (one mention each for the following) watching TV, homework from another ESL program, asking a lot of questions, reading newspapers, writing short essays about family and holidays, extra exercise sheets, and discussions about other topics relevant to daily survival and adjustment in the U.S.

Summary

In the tutors' views, the tutor training program was effective in making them feel prepared to tutor. They highlighted the achievement of the two main program objectives: better English pronunciation and teaching skills. While the best features of the training program were seen as learning good teaching skills, having a good model in their trainer, ways of motivating students, and speaking with more experienced tutors, they also suggested that improvements might be made in having more time to learn, building more confidence, learning more American usages of words, doing more reading, and learning techniques particularly useful for adult students. There was also a repeated theme of desiring that more tutoring practice be part of the training program. The materials used in the tutor training were unanimously seen as very helpful, although a few found the reporting materials too hard to use.

The tutees generally rate their tutors very well, with only a few commenting that they don't understand all they would like to from the sessions. After some experience tutoring, some tutors indicated the need for help in making more and better practice sheets for their students. Some tutors apparently do this to a great degree and others do not, a feature mentioned by both tutors and tutees. It was also suggested that periodic -- say, bimonthly -- sessions be held for the tutors to come together to discuss their ongoing experiences tutoring.

The tutees almost unanimously rated the videotapes and supportive materials as "just right" in level of difficulty for the TAG participants to learn English, with a few indicating they were either "too easy" or "too hard." The tutors, however, were almost

equally split as to whether the tapes were "too easy," "just right," or "too hard." Some areas for improvement noted included having longer dialogues and lessons, more subtitles for the teachers' speech on the tapes, books to accompany the tapes, more conversations about daily life, slower speed, and updating the skits.

V. EVALUATION OF PARTICIPANTS' ENGLISH LEARNING

The TAG Program's second goal was to teach English to the participants on the waiting list for AESL classes in order to improve their English skills adequately for their entry into the Level 2 classes. We also observed the AESL classes of the three Level 2 AESL teachers with TAG "graduates" in their classes to assess the TAG participants' uses of English and other indicators of learning skills compared to those of the other students, and tested all students in both classes with the BEST at the beginning and the end of the class terms[7].

English Background and Progression

Almost all of the participants (27 of 35) indicated that they had studied English some before the TAG Program. All but one of those 27, however, studied it for less than six months, generally through classes at other community-based organizations or through churches. Three indicated that they had studied at least some English in school in their native countries, though it was generally in their youth and they were now adults, and thus they attained little proficiency and remembered little. Asked if they used any English words or phrases when they first came to the U.S., 13 of 35 (37 percent) answered that they did, although the majority (63 percent) indicated that they did not. Of those who did, the most frequently used words and phrases included basic greetings such as: Hello, Thank You, Excuse me, Good morning, How are you?,

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[7] The BEST was administered by the TAG staff, after training by DAC staff.

and so on. Other examples given, by one or two persons each, included: "Can you give me ...?," "Where is the bathroom?," "I'm sorry," "My name is ... ," "My telephone number is ...," "Yes" and "No," and "chicken wings."

To assess their confidence in using these elements of English upon arrival, we asked whether it was easy or hard to use these words and phrases, whether they used them sometimes or often, and with whom. Of the 11 responding, seven found them easy to use and six found them hard. Five used the phrases often compared to six who reported using them only sometimes. The people with whom they spoke this basic English included primarily their neighbors and co-workers, though less frequently new people they would meet.

After they had been in the U.S. for awhile, however, but before the TAG tutoring, almost two-thirds (23 of the 36) reported having learned more English words and phrases and trying to use them, though 13 indicated they did not learn any more. For those who reported that they did, the examples of the types of words and phrases they used showed noticeably greater sophistication: Greetings were still predominant, though extended in content; Do you have a job?, What is your name?, Where do you live?, elevator use instructions, days of the week and months of the year, job-related vocabulary, and one person indicated "verbs and third person singular." Despite the increased sophistication, however, their confidence did not appear to increase as yet. Ten found these words and phrases easy to use and 11 found them hard; 16 indicated they tried to use them sometimes, while only two tried often.

After having participated in TAG tutoring for some time (at least two months for all those interviewed), 34 of 35 indicated they had learned new words and phrases. These words and phrases are generally expansions of the same themes about which they spoke above, including, as would be expected, considerably more detail in phrases and in the now longer and more complete sentences and in additional vocabulary. The main themes cited by interview respondents were: housing and apartment descriptions and procurement process, local transportation, shopping interactions, and greetings for casual conversation. Moreover, their confidence appeared to have increased considerably by this point, with 23 of 32 indicating it was now easy to use this English and only seven finding it hard (plus two who indicated a mix, "sometimes easy, sometimes hard"). Twenty-two use their rapidly developing English sometimes, whereas 10 report using it often. The majority (13 citations) use English mainly in their job situations, either with co-workers or with clients and customers. Next, they use it when shopping, then with "strangers" (presumably meaning when they meet new people).

Motivation for Learning English

Along with the changes in English usages described above, we also attempted to examine the participants' main motivations for wanting to learn English. We asked them to indicate Yes or No to a list we presented as to whether or not each item was a reason they wanted to learn English. The results, with the number of participants responding, are shown in Table V-1. As indicated there, shopping and job-related needs -- that is, economic survival

or growth through commerce and employment -- are the most motivating for the participants, cited by just about every respondent. The other reasons appear to motivate substantial numbers of participants, but don't appear to be as universal as the first two.

Table V - 1

REASONS FOR WANTING TO LEARN ENGLISH	FREQUENCY (out of 36)
talking to clerks at shops	34
your job or getting a job	33
taking the T or taxi or bus	27
going to school in the U.S.	26
going to the doctor or emergency room	21
other (included): - general communication with Americans - citizenship test - survival - travel/find directions - respect for speaking well - read mail	 6 5 4 2 1 1
talking to your neighbors	17
talking to your children's teachers	16

From the interviews with the sample of tutors, we also ascertained their perceptions of the participants' motivations for learning English. They largely reinforced the same reasons cited by the participants, indicating, in rough order, that job-related needs, shopping, transportation, medical care, and daily living in general represented the areas of greatest need for the TAG participants to learn English. The AESL teachers interviewed also concurred that job-related needs for English was a strong

motivator, with shopping, medical care, transportation and travel, and citizenship preparation being the next highest priorities.

Another motivation indicator asked of the AESL teachers was how hard the TAG students worked in class, with the response being generally "very hard," with the exception of one student who was very busy with a restaurant business. For those students without TAG backgrounds, one teacher reported that there was a wide range in how hard they worked at learning English through the class and one reported that the majority (about 80%) worked hard also, but that about 15% only worked "somewhat" and about 5% worked "a little."

Ways of Learning English

We also presumed that some information about the participants' English skills and learning might be inferred from their degree of difficulty or ease in using the videotapes and supplementary worksheets. Thus, when asking about these items we found that 27 (of 35) found the videotapes "just right," four found them "too hard," and four found them "too easy." Their assessment, however, is that the tapes helped them learn to speak English "a little" (20 respondents) more than "a lot" (13 respondents). Parallel information concerning the accompanying worksheets indicated essentially the same results: 22 found them "just right," seven found them "too hard," and for six they were "too easy." The worksheets helped 24 participants speak English "a little" and helped 11 speak it "a lot."

These findings are not inconsistent with the intended

structure of the program. That is, not all learners are supposed to find the videotapes "just right" for learning English easily. If that were the case, there would be no need for the tutors or any of their judgments about supplementary activities tutees might need. The TAG Program was not structured as a stand-alone video course. Rather the videotapes are a focal medium for the more complex learning process, which is facilitated by the tutors and the curriculum they implement around the tapes.

Finally, we asked about other ways in which the respondents were learning English. Watching TV and movies and talking to their children were each cited by 25 of the 36; 18 and 22 respectively learned from work and from reading signs, packages, and work instructions; fewer numbers (ten or less of each) learned from talking to neighbors, family members (other than their children), newspapers, a radio program that teaches English to Chinese people, an electronic dictionary, and books.

AESL Classroom Performance

Description of AESL Classes. Our intent in observing the Level 2 AESL classes was to get an idea of what TAG "graduates" would be experiencing in a classroom with non-TAG students. We looked at the *range of activities*, the *physical environment*, the use of *English and Chinese language* and *bilingual instruction*, and the *materials* used by the teachers and students.

We also rated the students on their *level of spoken English*. This rating in the context of one observation likely cannot reflect reliably the speakers' abilities, since the topic may be more or

less familiar, the presence of an outsider may affect the students, or the activities observed may not demand much independent verbal response (e.g., silent reading or whole class recitation).

Range of Activities. Activities typically ranged from the teacher introducing a new idea such as the verb "can" to phonetics and writing examples on the board, to playing a cassette tape with a dialogue, to students taking turns answering questions or reciting the content of the lesson for pronunciation and syntax practice. Students would also work silently either reading a passage or writing answers in their workbooks. Paired activities were also conducted where students were supposed to discuss a topic with new vocabulary or a handout with pictures. The English taught in this adult program is primarily "survival English," i.e., vocabulary and situations in which a student would experience in an everyday setting as opposed to an academic setting.

Physical Environment. Classes were held in either a classroom used during the day by a children's class, a large classroom near the QSCC administrative offices or on the third floor in the Oak Street building.

The children's classroom is very spacious, but the desks and chairs are small. It is well-lit with florescent lighting, but there are no windows. It has a wall-size blackboard and is decorated with historical figures from many ethnic groups as well as children's artwork and writing samples. Usually there was little noise, however, occasionally street noises such as sirens and horns honking and recitation from the class next door (only

divided with cubicle partitions, not walls) interrupted the quiet surroundings.

The large classroom is also spacious and florescent-lit with two walls covered with blackboards. There are several large tables with folding chairs. This room is decorated with a student-made quilt, some English expressions, and the alphabet at the top of one of the blackboards, but is otherwise plain. It was very quiet as it is surrounded by other rooms.

The Oak Street classrooms are small with new, bright paint and many decorations like posters, maps, and magazine pictures. Several tables are arranged in different ways depending on where the blackboard is located in the particular classroom. The lighting is good, coming mostly from the many windows during the day and the florescent lights in the evening. These rooms are comfortable and homey-feeling, but hot in summer and noisy from traffic and construction in the street and children playing at the daycare downstairs.

English and Native Language Use. Most of the students speak Cantonese and/or Mandarin. Some of them speak Vietnamese, Toisanese, and some other dialects. English was used quite a bit by the teachers, who are all bilingual, but was also translated either right away or later if the student didn't understand readily. Sometimes the teacher would introduce the new material entirely in English and ask questions in English, too. They often explained further or verified the students' comprehension in Chinese. The students often responded in English, but if they were not sure of what to say would ask for the word in Chinese, the

teacher would answer in English, and the student repeated in English.

Materials. In addition to the blackboards, which were used to introduce new ideas, students' examples, or other types of language teaching, materials used by the students and teachers varied. Usually, students referred to their QSCC-made text and workbooks and wrote answers directly into them. These materials have Chinese translations for much of the instructions and new vocabulary. Also used a great deal were handouts with stories, questions, or pictures to stimulate discussion among students. Occasionally, other materials were used such as a pair of shoes to imagine the person who wears them or a cassette tape and map handouts to listen to a dialogue for new vocabulary about giving directions.

Impressions. We observed in the several classes of about 15 to 20 adult students, led by three different teachers, a positive, comfortable learning environment. The students were encouraged but not forced to participate in class and the teachers were helpful and adapted their attitude depending on the student(s) being addressed at the moment. Students volunteered to respond or have conversations on a range from some very willing to most willing to a few unwilling.

The students apparently got on well with each other and the teachers, chatting and joking occasionally in Chinese. The only time this practice seemed to interfere with the learning process was during paired activities when students were instructed to have conversations in English, using the handouts for example. Students

were reluctant to do this unless the teacher was next to their desks helping direct their activity.

Finally, there was no clear difference between TAG and non-TAG students in the AESL classes. However, any conclusions from this observation would be unwarranted, because the proportions of TAG to non-TAG differed from class to class, as well as the characteristics of the students, who had been their tutors, what other English-learning practices they participated in, etc.

Student English Performance. We assessed the TAG students' performance in using English from the interviews with the AESL teachers, from the students' test scores, and from observations of their speaking in class. At the outset of the classes, the teachers indicated that the TAG students responded in class at a variety of levels -- two or three "volunteered to speak at any opportunity without hesitation," another two or three "spoke when requested or during recitation," though the majority "almost never spoke." The non-TAG students in the Level 2 classes, by comparison, were more homogeneous and mid-level in their responses, generally speaking "when requested or during recitation" to "often, with some hesitation." Considering other information available, it appears that the fact that the non-TAG students, most of whom went through a Level 1 AESL class, have learned an appropriate and consistent level of response which becomes fairly standard upon entering a Level 2 class. The TAG graduates, on the other hand, have not been in a standard classroom environment, at least recently, and thus respond quite differently when placed in that situation.

At that point of the interview, about two-thirds of the way through the class term, the teachers indicated that many of the TAG students did improve in their classroom responses, with about half responding in English without hesitation, or with only some hesitation. The non-TAG students were assessed as having stayed at about the same levels of responsiveness as they were in the beginning. Thus, it appears that the TAG students "catch up" with the others in terms of fitting into the general classroom response styles.

Other differences between the TAG and non-TAG students that the AESL teachers pointed out based on their experiences in teaching both groups (this being the first cohort of TAG graduates placed in AESL classes) included:

> a) TAG students appear to have fairly high literacy skills, both in their native and English languages, but their speaking skills are lower than those of the non-TAG students;
>
> b) the non-TAG students more often expect choral recitation type activities in class, whereas the TAG students do not; the TAG students appear to try to figure things out for themselves, work individually better, and follow instructions better on their own.

Students in both classes were tested with the BEST in their third week (pretest) and 22nd week (posttest) of the first 24-week term of 1993. The scores and gains for the oral and literacy subtests were compared from pretest to posttest for the TAG and non-TAG students, with the results shown in Table V-2. The students enrolled in second term classes, beginning in July 1993,

were also tested with the BEST during the third week, and those pretest scores are also shown in the table.[8]

Table IV-2

BEST Scores for AESL Level 2 Classes -- 1993[9]

Term	Subtest	ORAL		LITERACY	
	Group	TAG	non-TAG	TAG	non-TAG
First	N	11	17	11	17
	Pretest Mean (s.d.)	33.1 (13.0)	29.4 (15.7)	36.7 (9.8)	31.6[10] (11.6)
	Postest Mean[11] (s.d.)	39.7 (12.5)	42.6 (16.9)	42.3 (7.9)	38.1 (10.2)
	Mean Gain	6.6	13.2	5.5	6.5
Second	N	17	12	17	12
	Pretest Mean (s.d.)	22.1 (12.4)	33.3 (16.9)	26.1 (9.8)	32.8 (12.8)

As the test data show, the TAG students began the classes in the first term with slightly higher oral and literacy skills, as measured by the BEST, than did the non-TAG students. This

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[8] Since the evaluation ended in September, only the pretest scores for this term have been gathered and reported herein.

[9] Form B was used for the pretest, Form C for the postest, and scores for Form C were converted to scaled scores for comparison with Form B (in which raw scores and scaled scores are equivalent).

[10] The testers reported that some non-TAG students did not finish the last part of the literacy subtest, thus deflating their scores somewhat.

[11] One of the two teachers indicated to the students that this test would be used as the course final exam. This condition was different from that of the other class. Its effect, if any, would likely have been to slightly inflate the scores, mostly for the non-TAG students who made up the majority of this class.

measured by the BEST, than did the non-TAG students. This occurrence may be significant in that it suggests that the TAG Program was effective not only in bringing participants up to the same levels as those who went through AESL Level 1 classes, but possibly even higher levels of oral and literacy English skills. In terms of gains during the class, the TAG students gained somewhat in oral skills, but only about half of what the non-TAG students did. In literacy skills, however, both groups gained about the same amount, thus maintaining the TAG students' slightly higher levels of literacy skills. (None of the gains are statistically significant, however, and the number of students with both pre- and posttests is small. As a result, conclusions about these data should be interpreted with caution.)

What these scores suggest is that the TAG Program has prepared the students very well with the oral and literacy English skills to enter a Level 2 AESL class. The data also suggest that the program has given them the background to at least maintain progress in the class at the same level for literacy skills as those who have gone into Level 2 from a Level 1 class. The TAG students in Level 2 classes have not gained in oral skills, however, as much as the other Level 2 students did.

The second term scores indicate that the TAG students begin their AESL Level 2 classes with considerably less proficiency in both oral and written English than do their non-TAG classmates, and less than the TAG students of six months back, in the first term. The TAG students scored about 11 points lower than the non-TAG students in oral English and over 6 points lower in literacy.

Similarly, they were about 10 to 11 points lower in both subtests than the TAG students pretested in the first term.

The non-TAG students in these second term classes scored about the same as their non-TAG counterparts at the beginning of the first term, suggesting that there was nothing in the testing procedures from the first to the second term that accounts for the change, but rather something in the demonstrated proficiency of the TAG students. They may be less able learners, have weaker English backgrounds upon TAG entry, have not been tutored as well as the TAG students who entered classes the first term, or may simply not be as strong performers in a formal test as the non-TAG students are. This last possibility is a good one for at least two reasons. First, the spoken English observation data (detailed in Appendix B) indicates that TAG and non-TAG students performed about equally well in the beginning of term 2, and at about the same levels they did in the beginning of term 1. Second, the interviews with the AESL teachers (before this test data was analyzed) indicated no special problems with the TAG students in their classroom performance. Thus, despite the curiously low test scores, there appears to be no threat to the TAG students' successful functioning in AESL Level 2 during the second term.

Student English speaking was also assessed by observers at the beginning, midpoint, and end of each class's term. Each time a student spoke, he or she was rated on a 4-point scale[12] as follows:

[12] Adapted by the authors from the BEST pronunciation scale.

0 = Speech is almost always unintelligible.

1 = Speech is frequently incomprehensible.

2 = Speech is generally understandable, but occasionally difficult or impossible to comprehend.

3 = Speech is readily understandable.

The details of the instrument's reliability and validity, as well as all data, are presented in Appendix B. A summary of the findings is that class mean ratings ranged from about 1.2 (at the beginning of the terms) to 2.3 (near the end of the term) on the scale above, that the non-TAG students were almost always rated *very slightly*, though insignificantly, higher on average than the TAG students (the observers did not know who belonged to which group until after the class was observed), and that the TAG students gained at the same rate as the non-TAG students.

Summary

The immigrants enrolled in the TAG Program generally had some minimal training in English before their U.S. arrival, and a few months of English study in the U.S. before participating in the TAG Program. They report being able to use very little English upon arrival, and they made little progress in English usage before TAG. After two or more months of TAG tutoring, however, they report a substantial increase in their English vocabulary, speaking with more detailed phrases, and using longer and more complete sentences. In addition, their confidence in using English is reportedly increased substantially by this point, even after little increase in earlier learning stages.

The main motivations for learning English are economic -- to get an initial or better job and to conduct their shopping. Other uses of English are present but secondary. Moreover, the TAG students in AESL classes are reported by their teachers to work somewhat harder than other students, possibly indicating higher levels of motivation.

The majority of TAG participants found that the English levels used in the main tutoring tool, the videotapes and supporting materials, were "just right" to help them learn well, with a few finding them either "too difficult" or "too easy." In addition to these formal course materials, however, other television programs and movies were widely reported to be of additional assistance in learning English, along with talking to their children who were learning English in school, features which the TAG Program might attempt to capitalize on in future developments.

Once the TAG students enter AESL Level 2 classrooms, they appear able to perform well. Interviews with the teachers indicated that, while their other students generally respond in class at a mid-level of confidence and ability, the TAG students varied widely, from speaking without hesitation at any opportunity to almost never attempting to speak. After a few months in the classes, however, the TAG students appear to "catch up" in response level to the norm.

As judged by standardized English test scores, the TAG students gained about as much in English literacy as the other students. The non-TAG students, however, showed gains in oral English skills at about twice the level of the TAG students. This

latter test result would be worth examining further. Using the outside observers' ratings of English performance in the classrooms as the criterion, however, the TAG students performed only *very slightly* lower in English level than the non-TAG students, and both groups gained at about the same rates.

VI. ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR TAG

The third goal of DAC's evaluation effort was to establish an overall evaluation system for the TAG Program and to help develop TAG staff capability to implement it. In this section, we present more detail about that system through an application of it, along with the activities undertaken this past year to develop the TAG staff's capability to carry it out on their own.

Ongoing Program Analysis Framework

This system is not only intended to include the development of measures of program outcomes, but also to include means by which periodic, systematic feedback on program progress can be provided for ongoing program adjustments and development. The framework for accomplishing this goal is that of the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM), introduced early in this report. The specific application of the DEM framework to the TAG Program resulted in the model presented earlier in Figure 2.

Many of the outcomes from the DEM application to TAG have already been treated throughout the earlier parts of the report, for they were used as a starting point in deciding what to measure in this evaluation. Others among the outcomes, however, are program process features or are items for which there was no feasible measure available. As a result, we discussed many of the elements of the DEM with the TAG staff near the end of the evaluation project. In the Figure 3, we present the status of each in terms of its attainment and reference evidence of that

Figure 3
Status of Outcomes in DEM Framework

Outcomes	Attainment Status	Report Reference
1A. Qualified tutor candidates, sufficient number of candidates	Attained: there has been no shortage of qualified candidates; all are graduates of AESL Level 6, who come recommended by their teachers based on language proficiency and attitudes (willingness to learn and to help others). Many are referred from outside sources and interviewed by AESL staff on the basis of criteria.	
1B. Sufficient numbers of videotapes and print materials	Attained: interviews report from both tutors and participants	Section IV, "The Tutoring Process and Materials"
1B. Curriculum and materials instructionally appropriate for learners	Attained: interviews with tutors and participants, with some indications [illegible] on homework, pronunciation practice, short stories, and writing	Section IV, "Tutor Training and Skills"
1B. Ongoing revision of tutor training curriculum & materials; maintained/ improved TAG training process	Attained: reports of some additions added, e.g., use of newspaper articles, experienced tutors (#6) and two sessions more concrete case studies added based on accumulating experience; skill needs to be ongoing, however.	
1C. Competent tutors in English, tutoring skills, reporting skills; minimum 85% retention over the year	Attained: interviews with participants were generally quite positive on the English and tutoring skills; no information on the reporting skills; only 3 of 37 tutors quit, of whom 2 moved to a different city	Section IV, "Participants' Evaluation of the Tutoring Process and Materials"
1C. Tutors' enhanced career opportunities	Indeterminate: tutors report a belief that opportunities are enhanced, but longer-term study needed for more certain evidence	
1C. Tutors' enhanced English skills, learning skills, and confidence	Attained: tutors report continuing to learn more English, wanting to continue schooling; many lack confidence at outset of training, but almost none indicate so as they begin tutoring; TAG staff reports large increase in tutors' confidence	Section IV, "Tutor Training and Skills"
2A. Curriculum and materials instructionally appropriate for TAG learners	Attained, but with some qualification: most participants found them satisfactory, but only helped them learn English "a little"; tutors' perceptions were more mixed about tapes and materials' appropriateness for participants	Section IV, "The Tutoring Process and Materials" and Section V, "Ways of Learning English"

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Outcomes	Attainment Status	Report Reference
2A. Sound curriculum plan	Indeterminate. Would require AESL expert curriculum analysis	
2A. Ongoing evaluation of the curriculum	Indeterminate. No evidence was presented that this takes place formally; some tutors indicated however, that they adapt the materials provided to them in the training to suit their students	Section IV, The Tutoring Process and Materials
2B. 24 TAG learners enrolled per cycle	Attained for cycles 1-5, some slowdown for cycle 5. There were holdups in recruitment of cycle 6 tutees because of staff changes and other demands on staff time	
2C. 4 TAG learners per tutor	Attained in most cases; some problems with tutees whose work or family schedules change and cannot be placed with another tutee in the mutually available times	
2D. 2 meetings per month for 8 months by each team	Attained; tutor reports and student sheets show up for all tutoring sessions	Section IV, The Tutoring Process and Materials
2D. 50% of learners progress to level 2 in English proficiency	Attained at 88% level	Appendix C
2D. 85% retention rate for one year	Attained at 88% level	Appendix C
2D. TAG learners enhanced learning skills and increased confidence	Attained; participant self reports, observed AESL classroom performance, AESL teacher reports	Section V, English Background and Progression, and AESL Classroom Performance
2E. Maintained or improved TAG tutor quality, maintained or improved TAG tutoring process	Undetermined; no evidence of formal activities to monitor, supervise, or provide feedback to tutors	
2E. TAG learners enrolled in AESL classes at appropriate level	Attained, with few exceptions. AESL teachers report this is true, English performance from classroom observations, and BEST gains support this. A few students have difficulty and are counseled out of class or request return to TAG or Level 1	Section V, AESL Classroom Performance

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attainment where it was presented earlier. This set of results, however, is not meant to be a checklist for tallying successes and failures, but rather a heuristic for discussing some strengths of the program and areas for attention. The best use of the DEM application is through regular staff internal analysis.

A few program areas for attention are suggested through the analysis above, in some cases in combination with other findings from earlier sections. First are those outcomes having to do with program elements of tutor competence and quality (1C and 2E). While the interviews with TAG participants did indicate that they were generally satisfied with the tutoring, that evidence might well be influenced by "halo effect." Specific competencies in the three main objectives of the tutor training -- English, tutoring, and reporting skills -- might be specified and measured so that the tutors are *certified* before they begin tutoring. Then the program component of monitoring tutor quality (2E), providing more formal supervision and feedback, and improving the TAG tutoring process could be more effectively carried out. Information from this monitoring might then contribute to the ongoing revision of the tutor training curriculum and materials (1B).

Second, there was also no evidence that the desired ongoing revision of the TAG materials (2A) took place, and there were concerns about the appropriateness of the videotapes and materials in most effectively teaching English to the TAG participants (also 2A). Unless another method is used, however, these tapes were the most appropriate available on the market. It was noted in section IV of the report that a good number of tutors desired occasional

meetings with TAG staff and other tutors to discuss problems, share techniques they've found helpful, learn new methods, and adapt or develop their own materials. If such meetings did take place, they could serve as the primary vehicle for improvements in this area, as well as providing still more information for the continuing improvement of the tutor training program.

From the AESL teacher interviews, two suggestions were made for additional areas to consider in improving the program, areas akin to those above. The first stems from the observation that TAG "graduates" in the Level 2 classes are used to working individually or in pairs with their tutors and are used to learning through following steps in written or audiovisual materials. When they get into a classroom, many appear not to be used to, or confident about, interacting in larger groups. They seem to need help with the transition to overcome their reticence and thus benefit well from a large class learning setting. Suggestions included: a) building more interaction with oral English language activities into the tutoring process, at least as the time to enter an AESL class approaches; and b) in AESL classes with TAG "graduates," guide the teachers to conduct small group activities first so that the TAG members get used to speaking up in groups, then move into large group activities.

The second suggestion addresses an issue that arose periodically in sections IV and V of this report, from both the tutors and tutees -- namely the difficulty of tutoring pairs of students in which each member is at a very different English ability level. One obvious solution is to develop a better system

to pair tutees with similar abilities, such as a master matrix of students' levels and schedules and tutor schedules to see if better combinations emerge, recognizing that there may be no possibility of getting every pair perfectly matched. Another potential solution may be to consider peer tutoring within the pair, under the guidance of the formal TAG tutor and/or TAG staff. Such a solution would involve special training or supportive assistance for the tutor in such a situation. The TAG staff is well-aware of this problem and has devoted much apparent energy to its solution. The extent to which more special solutions are sought depend, at least partially, on the extent of the problem. If it is not known how many tutee pairs are thus mismatched, perhaps that could be examined more carefully.

TAG Staff Evaluation Capacity Building

Progress has been made in building TAG staff capacity to implement their own evaluation. First, the TAG staff worked through the development of the DEM application with DAC staff. This exercise provided an experience of program analysis in a manner which both laid the groundwork for evaluative judgments to be made and which fits into the ongoing program management, development, and decision-making process.

Second, the TAG staff reviewed, critiqued, and suggested revisions to the interview protocols drafted by DAC. In doing so, they gained experience in interview development methods. Once the drafts of the interview protocols were established, TAG staff trained by DAC in conducting the interviews with TAG

participants. Finally, they then conducted the interviews in Chinese, providing English responses for DAC to analyze.

Third, the TAG staff helped select a standardized measure of English achievement, underwent training in administering the one selected (the BEST), and administered the BEST to students pre- and post in two AESL Level 2 classes.

Fourth, DAC trained the TAG staff in a classroom observation scheme. This was followed by one session in which the TAG staff conducted the observations alongside the DAC staff.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the information gathered from all sources, the following conclusions about the effectiveness of the TAG Program are suggested.

A. ***The TAG Program is clearly an efficient opportunity for immigrants to start formally studying English sooner than available classroom opportunities allow. This is especially true for those who fit into demographic groups with the greatest scheduling and other logistical barriers.***

The TAG students are generally slightly older, less educated, and more often married and have children than other immigrants who have contact with QSCC's English programs. This group may find it easier to begin their study of English in a less formal way than a traditional class and may also find the scheduling easier than the classes would demand. Since they are generally less educated, they may also find the tutoring and videotapes a less intimidating transition into more formal English study than classes. While this characterization holds in general, the TAG participants do in fact represent the entire range of demographic characteristics, and thus TAG is not only limited to a select group.

B. ***The tutor training appears to be successful in developing English and tutoring skills to at least an adequate level for effective tutoring.***

This success is evidenced by the tutors' unanimous reports that they were prepared to tutor well by the end of the training, their tutees generally rated their effectiveness very well, and the TAG "graduates" in the Level 2 AESL classes are generally

performing at least adequately. Additionally, although some problems with the tutoring process were cited, such as some tutors lacking full confidence in their abilities, these problems did not appear to be systemic. Rather, they seemed relatively minor and were overcome individually or with the support of the TAG staff. For this problem in particular, nervousness or lack of confidence is generally characteristic of all new teachers. Moreover, this lack of confidence was recognized by the program staff as a problem to overcome, and the program was designed to build the tutors' confidence as part of their skills. In light of this understanding, that only very few of the tutors interviewed cited nervousness or a lack of confidence may be taken as a positive sign of the TAG Program's impact. (On the other hand, there may have been some cultural press against admitting to nervousness or lack of confidence, and thus more tutors may have been more insecure than they admitted to the Caucasian interviewers.)

Some of the suggestions for improvement noted by both tutors and tutees, described in more detail in sections IV and V, might well be taken under consideration by the TAG staff for program development opportunities. Highlights of these included having more tutoring practice in the training sessions, making supplementary materials and exercises based on assessing tutees' needs, and occasionally meeting with other tutors and TAG staff to discuss problems.

C. ***The videotapes and supportive written materials appear to be at the appropriate level of challenge for most of the tutees, and the tutors appear to use them well in teaching English.***

Some of the tutees, however, reported that they found the tapes and materials too easy or too hard. As discussed earlier, that is not a problem in itself, for the TAG Program design intended to use the videotapes and materials as a core around which the tutors would work with learners. The tutors have as one of their roles to adapt the learning activities to the abilities and speeds at which the learners can use the tapes and other materials. The attention to this matter signalled by some tutors' comments, however, indicates that the issue is a concern for them. TAG staff's response might include a clarification and reemphasis on the tutors' needs to adapt to varied learner paces, and perhaps more assistance in helping them do so. This individualizing could be accomplished through a part of the tutor training program which addresses how to assess the pace and difficulty levels of tapes and materials, and how to modify those two as needed. If this is too much for an already crowded tutor training curriculum, then perhaps a follow-up session could be conducted for those who need it after a month or so of tutoring. The latter suggestion would address a desire expressed earlier by some tutors for periodic follow-up sessions, as well as to address the problems of the pair-level differences discussed earlier.

Another option may be to establish a resource file available to all tutors. This resource file could furnish activity ideas, books, or other worksheets and materials provided by TAG staff and

other tutors. Then each tutor could obtain help in expanding his or her repertoire of techniques or learning activities for tutees.

D. ***TAG appears to have provided a substantial boost to the participants' English learning and confidence in English usage.***

From the interview data, there appeared to be slow, if any, progress in learning English through formal study in the native country and in the general acculturation process in the U.S. The TAG Program rapidly expands the participants repertoire of English vocabulary, phrases, and confidence in using those. Moreover, their motivation to work at learning English appears high. It stands to reason that the TAG Program is effective in enhancing that motivation by giving the participants a tangible learning activity to engage in, as compared to doing no formal learning while on a course enrollment waiting list.

E. ***TAG participants who enter AESL Level 2 classes progress at least as well as their non-TAG classmates in English literacy skills, but not nearly as well in oral language skills.***

This conclusion speaks well of the TAG Program in terms of the students' progress in classroom literacy skills, but not quite as well for the oral skills' component. The TAG students' gain in oral skills, however, was about one-half a standard deviation, and is thus considered to be "educationally significant."[13] Further, the TAG Program developers assumed early on that the TAG tutoring

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[13] Gains of one-third a standard deviation or more are considered "educationally significant" by the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel (Ralph, J. and Dwyer, M.C., *Making the Case: Evidence of Program Effectiveness in Schools and Classrooms*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1988).

would not be as effective as a class in developing the students' English skills. Thus, the lower gains in oral skills are not a blemish on the program, but rather a statement of relative strength and weakness from this limited evidence. It appears worth some attention, however.

Two considerations are suggested. One, the curriculum and teaching techniques might be examined more carefully to determine if there is some mismatch between the TAG preparation and the classroom activities with respect to oral skill development. If any are identified, then perhaps shoring up those discrepancies might help, either in the tutoring program or in the AESL classes, or both. Two, these findings are based on a relatively small number of students tested and a one-time pre-posttest occurrence. Thus, the finding should be accepted with caution, for it may be an anomaly of the small numbers and single event.

In addition to their lower oral test performance, many TAG students were reported to be somewhat reticent in the classes in the beginning. Some overcame that reticence and began speaking up more often and with less hesitation over time, while others still held back. This is consistent with the slower progress in oral skills shown on the BEST data, but the cause of the problem is not clear. Do the students hesitate to speak up because their skills are inferior to the others? Or do they progress at a slower pace in oral skills because they don't speak up and thus take advantage of the oral skills learning opportunities in class?

F. ***The tutor competency, monitoring, and ongoing improvement component of the program could be better formalized.***

The central issues here are the lack of a monitoring system for tutor supervision and feedback (both from TAG staff to tutors, and from tutors to TAG staff) and the expressed, and generally desirable, need for continuous improvement of the tutoring materials and techniques. A monitoring or supervision system seems essential to the operation of any set of employees, especially such a loosely affiliated group as these tutors, who perform this function on a very limited time basis. Given that many tutors also expressed a desire for occasional meetings to share techniques, discuss problems, learn from others, and that they try to develop or adapt materials to use with their students, a monitoring process might be combined with periodic "inservice training" and problem-solving sessions for the tutors. That way the monitoring and ongoing training could be reasonably informal and unobtrusive, yet contribute to the continuous improvement of the tutoring process. Moreover, in such periodic sessions, the practicing tutors might express needs or present new products or techniques that they have developed. These could be incorporated into future tutor training curricula and instruction and made available in a resource file.

The notion of tutor competency can also be partially integrated with the foregoing in the following way. If a set of competencies for tutors were specified, then it would have at least two uses. One, tutors would have to be certified at the end of the tutor training before they could tutor, thus ensuring the quality of the tutors. Two, the competencies could serve as the

basis for ongoing monitoring, perhaps by TAG staff observation of tutoring sessions, or through tutor self-reports in the types of meetings suggested above. The monitoring need not be so formal as a full-time employee evaluation system might be. A set of competencies for tutor and TAG staff joint discussion and tutor self-evaluation, however, might help focus efforts better, promote skills that the TAG staff wants to see improved generally, or simply form the starting point for discussion at tutor ongoing training/problem-solving sessions.

We also recognize that not all tutors could attend regular meetings in addition to their tutoring, other jobs, classes they may be taking, family responsibilities, and so on. Even if the sessions were voluntary, they would provide some benefit to the program. Perhaps some incentives, probably non-monetary, such as additional materials, books, or the chance to hear invited speakers, could be provided to encourage as high a rate of participation as possible.

G. ***TAG staff evaluation capability has been developed, but its more complete establishment appears blocked by time availability or commitment to evaluation activities.***

The original plan for this project included additional funding for the TAG staff so that they would have time available to conduct evaluation activities and incorporate them as a normal part of their program functions. Significant progress in that regard has been made, as described in section VI above. Some of the activities for which the TAG staff were responsible, however, were very difficult to conduct in timely fashion. We recognize a number

of features that have been problematic. One, new staffing and staff assignments occurred -- these often delay activity and produce uncertainty of individuals' roles and functions. Two, evaluation activities in general are difficult for program personnel to take on with the same legitimacy as their direct service activities. And three, the original plan by TAG and DAC did not specify how much time needed to be allotted for specific activities. After the experience of the past year, the TAG staff now has a clearer set of expectations for time and activities and can plan more precisely the evaluation tasks that need to be conducted. It is recommended that for any evaluation activities QSCC commits to, they be scheduled and staff responsibilities assigned at the onset of each class term, so that they do not get neglected during the pressure of events during the terms.

One original intention of this year's grant was to end with a Program Effectiveness Panel submission on the program if the data warranted. We have concluded that the data are not extensive enough from this first year's evaluation to make a strong claim (based on a comparison with the two successful submissions we reviewed). Therefore, a submission will not be prepared this year. Rather, TAG should attempt to build appropriate ongoing evaluation activities into the program so that a submission can be prepared at some point in the future.

These "appropriate" evaluation activities for the PEP purposes should include continuation of:

a) BEST administration to all AESL classes with TAG students in them; administer the BEST to both the TAG and the non-TAG students within two weeks of the classes' start and two weeks before they end; change forms from pretest to posttest and convert scores as directed in the administration manual.

b) AESL class observations at about the one-month, three-month, and five-month points; particularly important are the observations of oral English usage levels, using the protocols DAC used and trained TAG staff in; QSCC might involve Umass grad students to participate in the observations -- an excellent idea, as long as a structure for quality maintenance is instituted.

c) interviews with TAG students after they have received about two months of tutoring; TAG staff may wish to scale down the interview protocol if staff time is a problem; interview a randomly selected half of each group of tutees.

For internal TAG Program management and development purposes, we recommend that the following be continued:

a) BEST testing, as above; monitor the results after each testing period to see what the patterns of results say about the program and the students.

b) AESL class observations, as for the PEP purposes above; review the results to see what insights for the program or the students are suggested.

c) interviews with TAG students, as for the PEP purposes above; also, as in #2 a) & b) immediately above, synthesize and review for insights into program progress or problems.

In addition, the observations of tutor training and interviews with tutors after they have been tutoring for two or more months would be valuable for the same types of ongoing internal evaluation purposes. These seem less critical, however, than the internal management recommendations detailed above. If there aren't resources available to conduct the tutor data collection as formally as DAC did in this past year's project, then perhaps periodic focus group meetings with tutors on some of the key themes from the interview protocol could serve the same purposes.

Finally, the TAG application of the DEM may be useful for the staff's quarterly or semi-annual review and program analysis. This

would be useful for building and maintaining staff focus on the big program picture and how all the pieces fit together in it, for identifying areas that may be slipping out of focus before they get too far away, and for stimulating thinking about developments and improvements.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TAG PARTICIPANTS AND COMPARISON GROUPS

(March 1993 Data)

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TAG AND COMPARISON GROUPS
(Shown in Percents of Each Group)

	GROUP			
CHARACTERISTIC	TAG PARTICIPANTS (N=82)	LEVEL 1 WAITING LIST (N=337)	LEVEL 2 WAITING LIST (N=241)	LEVEL 2 ENROLLEES (N=55)
YEARS ON WAITING LIST 1	57	22	30	16
2	9	18	24	9
3	34	55	46	75
AGE 16-24	5	5	9	4
25-44	54	68	80	75
45-59	35	22	10	16
60+	6	4	1	6
YEARS OF FORMAL EDUCATION 0	9	8	6	7
1-3	7	8	5	5
4-6	37	29	9	29
7-9	34	37	39	29
10+	13	18	41	29
PRIOR ENGLISH STUDY (MONTHS) 0	59	63	15	60
1-3	18	16	19	9
4-6	9	9	22	13
7-9	4	1	3	0
10+	11	11	41	8
YEARS AFTER U.S. ARRIVAL 0-3	77	58	50	40
4-6	15	26	31	38
7-9	2	11	12	16
10+	6	5	7	5
MARITAL STATUS: MARRIED	85	77	73	73
SINGLE	15	23	26	27
NUMBER OF CHILDREN 0	37	47	59	44
1-3	54	45	37	47
4-6	6	9	3	9
7-9	4	0	0	0
GENDER MALE	29	31	22	25
FEMALE	71	69	78	75

APPENDIX B

AESL CLASS SPOKEN ENGLISH OBSERVATIONAL ANALYSIS

We began the observation process with one special intent: to assess the confidence of the TAG "graduates" once they entered AESL Level 2 classes, since it was hypothesized by the program staff that they would be more confident in English usage. As a result, we observed for the English level of the students, rated each time they spoke a substantial "bit" in English.

These English levels were rated on a 4-point scale, adapted by the authors from the BEST pronunciation scale, as follows:

0 = Speech is almost always unintelligible.

1 = Speech is frequently not comprehensible.

2 = Speech is generally understandable, but occasionally difficult or impossible to comprehend.

3 = Speech is readily understandable.

This rating scale was taken as the next best indicator of TAG's impact in lieu of direct confidence in speaking English. We had considered counting the number of times a student volunteered to speak in class, but ruled that out since whether a student volunteers or not in class is strongly influenced by the teacher's instructional approach at a given time -- some teachers call on students directly for responses, others open up questions for general class responses, some students are simply more or less vocal than others in the latter situations independent of their confidence in speaking English.

To use the scale, the observer provided a rating each time a student spoke. After the class the ratings were averaged for each student. The evaluation design called for the observations to take place within the first month of the 6-month class term, near the

mid-point, and within the last month. At least one of the observation sessions was conducted by two independent observers using the same rating scale.

Results

Our first concern was with the reliability of the scale. On this count it performed fairly well, after observer practice. For the three observation periods with paired observers, we obtained Pearson correlations of: 0.81 ($p < .01$, 13 df)

0.52 ($p < .05$, 14 df)

0.46 ($p < .10$, 13 df)

Second, to test the validity of the observation scale, we compared the observed ratings with one group of students' BEST Oral scores. They correlated at -0.13, a very low level, indicating no substantiation that this observed rating is a valid indicator of the students' oral English abilities. The BEST Oral exam is individually administered, however, and contains a variety of content, whereas the class observation was a group setting, and for each particular observation period the content was generally one or two topics. Both of those differences could account for student performance differences.

On the other hand, the mean student ratings rose at a fairly steady rate over time in the class, as one would expect. Furthermore, the pre-ratings for the second term observations are again down to the vicinity of the pre-ratings from the first term. Data to show these trends are included in Table B1. The results suggest that the scale is a valid measure of classroom oral English language performance.

Table B1
Mean Spoken English Observation Ratings -- AESL Level 2 Classes

OBSERVATION POINT	TERM			
	FIRST		SECOND	
	CLASS 1	CLASS 2	CLASS 1	CLASS 2
BEGINNING	1.22 (17)	1.46 (12)	1.5 (12)	1.31 (13)
MIDPOINT	1.58 (15)	2.18 (14)		
END		2.09 (12)		

As a result, we conclude that the observation rating scale of English speaking ability used in this study is a moderately reliable measure of classroom-based English performance. The rating scale is not necessarily a good indicator of general English oral ability, however, because of its poor correlation with the BEST.

Another feature of the instrument that showed up in the analysis was that bilingual Chinese observers rated the students slightly higher in English ability than did the English-only observers with whom they were paired. English-only and bilingual pairs were used in two of the three paired observations (the correlations of 0.81 and 0.46). The class means for each are shown in Table B2. Note that while these differences were true for the class means, they did not occur on the individual student level -- that is, some individual students were rated higher by the English-only observers than by the bilingual observers. It seems likely that the English-only observers are more stringent in their expectations of clear and comprehensible English than the bilingual observers were; the latter, having come through a Chinese-speaking

environment and still living in it, find less clearly spoken English more comprehensible. The implications are that the absolute value of any observed ratings of spoken English be interpreted in light of the observer's English speaking background, and that any planned future observations take the observers' backgrounds into account.

Table B2
Mean Spoken English Observation Ratings
by Observer Language Background

OBSERVER	CLASS 1 (MIDPOINT)	CLASS 2 (MIDPOINT)
	N = 15	N = 14
ENGLISH ONLY	1.47	2.08
BILINGUAL (ENGLISH/CHINESE)	1.68	2.27

TAG "Graduates" Compared to Others

The mean ratings for each observation period for the TAG "graduates" versus the others in the classes are shown in Table B3. Note that the comparisons are tenuous since the numbers of TAG students are very small in some of the classes. The trend, however, is that the students progress at about the same rate in both classes regardless of whether they were TAG students or not. Moreover, the differences between the TAG and the other students in a given class is rarely beyond a few tenths of a point on the 4-point scale, which is essentially the same given the reliability level of the rating scale. We take this as evidence that the TAG students do perform as well in the AESL Level 2 setting as those students who have not had TAG. (Inferential statistical tests are

inappropriate given the small numbers of comparison students in each of the classes. It would also have been inappropriate to combine both classes to compare all TAG students to all others in order to have greater cell sizes, since the observations were not necessarily taken at the same time across classes, the class/ teacher effect could be substantial, and different raters were used.)

Table B3
Mean Spoken English Observation Ratings
for TAG vs non-TAG Students
(Number of Students shown in Parentheses)

TERM	CLASS	GROUP	OBSERVATION POINT		
			BEGINNING	MIDPOINT (Observer 1)	MIDPOINT (Observer 2)
FIRST	1	TAG	0.9 (3)	1.3 (1)	1.0 (1)
		non-TAG	1.3 (14)	1.5 (14)	1.7 (14)
	2	TAG	*	2.1 (11)	2.3 (11)
		non-TAG	*	2.1 (3)	2.3 (3)
SECOND	1	TAG	1.3 (5)		
		non-TAG	1.3 (5)		
	2	TAG	1.6 (9)		
		non-TAG	1.3 (3)		

* = The data for this class were not usable.

This analysis of observational data suggests that it served as a valuable pilot for developing a sound observational scheme of oral English performance in the classroom. That is, there appears to be very little, if any, observational data of this type in the adult ESL assessment literature. We have gathered data to suggest that the scheme shown is reliable and valid. With greater degrees of control in implementing the design in other larger-scale studies (i.e., piloting and practice before the actual data collection, careful pairing of observers, similar numbers of treatment and comparison group members, etc.), this simple observational scheme may be useful for evaluation of such programs.

APPENDIX C

TAG PARTICIPANT RETENTION DATA

We examined the TAG participant files to extract information which would help determine the extent to which the two main objectives were met for Goal #2 of the Discrepancy Evaluation Model's application to TAG. The results are as follows. Records were available for 109 TAG participants placed as of July 23, 1993.

Objective A: To retain 85 percent of the TAG learners in the program for at least one year.

We first examined those TAG learners who were placed in tutoring before 7/24/92, so that they would have the potential of retention in the program for at least one year. There were 57 placed for TAG tutoring before 7/24/92. Of those 57 students, 88 percent (50 students) were either:

a) still in TAG (19 students),

b) had entered an AESL Level 2 class in July 1992 or January or July 1993 (31 students), or

c) had unusual circumstances which made them meet the intent of this objective (7 students).

The 31 students who entered AESL Level 2 classes were generally in TAG tutoring for less than one year. But since they met the intent of this objective, they are counted toward it. In fact, the average time between their TAG tutoring start and AESL class entrance was 8.9 months. This average is undoubtedly larger than the time it really took them to "complete" TAG, for the classes begin only in January and July and a TAG student who completes TAG and qualifies for Level 2 in, say, May, must wait until July to enter a class. Thus, the additional months of waiting after qualifying for Level 2 have been added into the

average above. (Dates at which qualification for Level 2 was reached are not available in the records.)

The circumstances for the group who technically were not retained in the program for at least a year, but who are considered to have met this objective, include the following:

- stopped in the middle of the year and resumed TAG in 6/93
- finished all the tapes, but couldn't schedule a class until 7/93
- qualified for Level 2, can't schedule a class because of work schedule
- qualified for Level 2; going to China for one month; will enter a class in 1/94
- was 13 months before being able to schedule a class
- tutor went to China for one year; students insist on waiting for her to return to resume TAG (2 students).

The above figure of 88 percent exceeds the standard stated in the objective. Thus, we can conclude that this objective has been achieved and exceeded.

Objective B: 50 percent of the TAG learners retained in the program will reach Level 2 within one year.

We counted those students who were either (a) in TAG for one year or more without termination, or (b) qualified for Level 2 and either enrolled in an AESL class, were noted as waiting for a class which met their schedule, or did not want to enroll in a class (and generally were waiting for higher level tapes to become available). There were 58 students who met the criteria above. Of those, 48, or 83 percent reached Level 2 within one year. Thus, this objective is achieved well beyond its expected level.